1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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(*a*) A man of the River Gira

(*b*) Woman and child of Wasida

PLATE IV

[facing p. 26]
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1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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IV

PERSONAL ENHANCEMENT

Clothes

291 ONE of the earliest observers of the Orokaiva, John Green, who was Government Agent in the year 1895, reported that 'The majority of the men who live on the Mambare are quite naked'.[1] Sir Wm. MacGregor noted a year earlier that in the neighbourhood of Gona Bay the men wore 'a strip of painted mulberry cloth', but that many wore nothing; and again in the same *Annual Report* he writes, 'On the Ope the men are naked'.[2]

In these times one seldom sees a man without the perineal band of bark-cloth, *bo*. Old men and sick men sometimes go quite naked for the sake of comfort; and boys until they assume the *bo* some time before puberty. The perineal band is a strip of bark-cloth passed round the waist, drawn between the legs, and knotted loosely in front. Because of this method of adjustment it is called *bo-abo*. It always covers the penis, but a native apparently feels no shame about exposing his testicles. When the strip is long enough it is so
[531] arranged that the end will hang as an apron or tail-piece which is painted with rude but effective patterns. This latter fashion belongs to the Bush and Salt-Water People rather than to the River People.

The woman's dress consists of a bark-cloth skirt, i.e. a wider strip passed round the hips and supported by being tucked under a belt in front. At the rear it is not tucked under but hangs somewhat below the belt, and young and attractive women allow it to show a glimpse of their buttocks. These younger women and *atawai*, or unmarried
291 girls, wear the *bo* short, not reaching to their knees, but with
531 older women it is sometimes of an ungainly size. Newly made, the cloth is coarse and stiff, but being painted with

[1] *Annual Report*, 1895-6, p. 76. [2] *Annual Report*, 1895-6, pp. 4 and 53.

[p.132]

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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designs in red, brown, and black is not unbecoming. A good specimen may be regarded much as a party frock, and a woman is fully conscious of being well dressed when she wears it. It is amusing to see an old dame in expectation of a visit dart into her house and reappear in her best piece of bark-cloth. Growing older the garment grows softer and dirtier and loses all claim to beauty.

Among the Bush and Salt-Water People the woman's *bo* is worn from puberty onwards; among the River People only from marriage onwards. Nowadays a new sense of modesty in the presence of white men has altered this, but one may still occasionally see fully-developed young women among the Aiga or Binandele who go quite naked and without any trace of shame. The assumption of the *bo* by girls as well as boys will be referred to in a later chapter. A few examples of patterned bark-cloth are shown in the accompanying illustration. The method of beating the cloth and painting it are described under 'Arts of Life' (pp. 77–8).

The palm-leaf petticoat, commonly known by the Motuan name *rami*, is found as a sign of mourning among the Dirou tribe and on the lower Opi (see p. 222 n.). It is also reported at Lake Koena without any suggestion that it is restricted to mourning;[1] and further as worn by the Yema at Bovera on the Eia, where the older women use it as the proper dress of their people, while the younger have adopted the bark-cloth skirt of their Binandele neighbours.[2]

The Bark-cloth Hat, Pobu. The heads of old men are sometimes covered with a small sheet of bark-cloth called *pobu*. It encloses the mass of their hair, and falls over the back. Usually ragged and greasy, the *pobu* is no ornament but yet a mark of age and importance. No young man is seen wearing this unsightly rag. He would be at once too vain of his appearance and too modest to assume a headgear that is the prerogative of age.

The Widow's Cowl. Upon her emergence from seclusion the widow wears a cowl-shaped headgear, also called *pobu*. This, as she hangs her head, conceals her whole face and

[1] Beaver, *Annual Report*, 1914–15, p. 14.
[2] F. R. Cawley, *Annual Report*, 1922–3, p. 25.

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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covers the curious shame which she feels on this occasion. It is made of bark-cloth or of string netting, and is embroidered, sometimes completely covered, with the seeds known as Job's Tears. Being made and decorated with great care, however, it is later worn rather as an ornament under which the widow's charms suffer no concealment.

The Widow's Vest, Baja. This is usually a straight sleeveless shirt of knitted string completely covered with Job's Tears (*Coix lachrimae*). It reaches usually to the waist but sometimes as low as to the knees. *Coix lachrimae* seeds are of two kinds, the one a delicate grey, the other fawn, and with the introduction of black and sometimes red seeds the garment may be very effectively decorated.

The Bark-cloth Mantle. This is merely a broad sheet, three feet square or more, which is wrapped round the shoulders in cold weather. It is also used very prettily by girls in the dance. Holding it by two corners, the dancer swings it to and fro as she moves or allows it to float out behind her head. The bark-cloth is gaily painted and the girl's movements are light and graceful, so that in this guise she is not ineptly called *horiri*, 'the butterfly'.

Bi-kaio, the Apron. This is a small square of knitted string which hangs from the belt in front of the body. It is worn only by old men of distinction, and is seldom seen even on them. It may be only a partly assimilated introduction from the hill neighbours (Biagi, &c.), among whom it is certainly found more commonly. In the only example which I saw the string was knitted in patterns of red, brown, black, and white, and the fabric was decorated with black seeds and tufts of cuscus fur. W. N. Beaver mentions the *bi-kaio* in his list of *otohu*.[1]

Hair-dressing

The Orokaiva commonly allows his hair to grow long, and with the frequent application of coco-nut oil the close ringlets become clogged in a series of tags. The typical *coiffure* is therefore a mass of tails about the thickness of a

[1] 'Notes on Homicidal Emblems among the Orokaiva', &c., *Annual Report*, 1918–19, p. 97; under *Ve Haja*.

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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Boy Playing the Pipe, *Hiviro*

PLATE XX [facing p.86]

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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practice the new name (that of the slain) almost entirely supersedes the old; and, what is of importance here, the name of the slain warrior is sometimes taken not by the slayer himself but by his son. Instances of this are not uncommon.

Body Deformations. The perforations of the ear-lobes are made within the first few months of the infant's life. The piercing of the nasal septum is delayed until it is perhaps a year or so old. Among nearly all the Orokaiva both operations are performed simply by clamping on a tortoise-shell ring (*siatu*) which gradually works through the flesh. Strictly speaking it is the duty of the *tato* to provide the *siatu*, but the rule is not always observed.[1] Among the Hunjara tribe, I believe, it is the custom to defer the making of the nose-hole until the initiation ceremony, when youths and girls, sitting in a row, have to submit their noses to a painful and sometimes bloody thrust with a bone needle.

The Assumption of Clothing. Young children—boys or girls—go naked. With boys it is usual among all the tribes to assume the perineal band (*bo*) at various ages before they reach puberty. This is certainly the modern usage, and I believe it was the former usage also. Whether it was formerly permissible for the boy to adopt his *bo* without any ceremony (as he sometimes does nowadays) I cannot say; but it appears that any festivity might be made the occasion of bestowing it. For instance, at a dance which forms one of the earliest of the mortuary ceremonies, a youngster received his *bo* as a sort of extraneous incident in the day's procedure; and the same occurred in another ceremony in which the widow was finally discarding her mourning. The formal bestowal of a *bo* means a present to the man who bestows it, so that when a pig is killed for any major ceremony it is a good opportunity for providing a share as payment for a minor rite. The occasion for honouring the child is all the more fitting as a large number of spectators will be present.

[1] In *J. R. A. I.* liv, 1923, p. 407, I wrote: 'The maternal uncle has certain ceremonial duties to perform, e. g. that of piercing the child's nose. . . .' It appears, however, that this duty does not belong necessarily to the maternal uncle or side.

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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At the initiation or seclusion the candidates all receive new *bo*, which are stained red. As it is usual for the candidate to be fully developed he has nearly always assumed his *bo* previously through motives of modesty; but it is now bestowed again. On only one occasion have I seen a youth brave it out, and wait for a formal opportunity of assuming a perineal band even after he had obviously reached the age of puberty.

The *bo* is given by any of a variety of relatives. Among fifteen instances it was given six times by the true father, six times by the maternal uncle, and once each by the paternal grandfather, the maternal grandfather, and the elder brother. For the actual investiture a man of distinction may be asked to officiate, just as in the more important *Otohu* ceremony the *otohu* is bestowed by a noted warrior.

The girl's *bo*, a skirt of bark-cloth, is assumed at the termination of the seclusion which follows the first appearance of her menses. When she makes her début, it is with a spear or club in one hand, a bunch of betel-nuts in the other, and a bark-cloth skirt about her waist with a hole in it which is supposed to, but does not, show her genitalia. No satisfactory reason was given for this last detail, except that a girl would be subject to ridicule afterwards if it were not carried out. In the majority of the Orokaiva tribes the girl continues to wear an ordinary *bo* skirt after the ceremony; but among the Aiga and the River People this investiture is only an incident. The girl, although fully developed, goes naked until her marriage, only wearing a *bo* during her periods. This custom, viz. of unmarried girls going naked, is falling into disuse.

The Initiation Cycle. Usually about the age of puberty, but sometimes earlier, boys and girls undergo an initiation; though it is only among the Southern Orokaiva that the ceremony takes a definite and unmistakable form. Here the candidates (male and female) are subjected to a good deal of horse-play at the hands of men impersonating *embahi* or *siango*, i.e. spirits of the dead; and in the course of it they are introduced to the bull-roarer and the sacred flute, which are of course objects of mystery to the uninitiated children.

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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(*a*) A Bride with part of the Bride-price

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(*b*) Preparations for handing over the Bride-price

PLATE XXII [facing p. 140]

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

slightly from that of Chinnery and Beaver,[1] but principally by a slight amplification. I have divided their Dobodura tribe into three, Sauaha, Sangara, and Dirou; and I have given the name Jeva-Buje to that branch of the Binandele inhabiting the lower Kumusi. By the addition of minor tribal names, such as are mentioned on p. 151, the matter would be complicated and not helped.

In one instance, that of Sauaha (and perhaps we might say in another, that of the Binandele and the Jeva-Buje), the tribal territory is not continuous, but in the others there is a fairly well-defined local spirit which belongs to a solid block of territory. This local spirit, which was in evidence among the clans (*vide* p. 107), is certainly of some moment. It is probably the principal motive behind the minor tribal groups and the temporary clan confederacies within the tribe. When, for instance, a number of clans band together to support one of their number in a semi-warlike dispute, it is, I have been told, because they are *pusu tahavo*, 'one ground', and, therefore, natural allies.

Although the boundaries on the map make it appear that the tribal territories are coterminous, there is commonly a no-man's-land of greater or less extent. This is particularly marked in the case of the Aiga, who (while in close touch with the Jeva-Buje) are separated from their other neighbours on north, east, and west by a good half-day's journey through virtually uninhabited country. In the more densely populated southern end of the division this territorial isolation is not so complete.

(2) Certain tribal peculiarities have been spoken of already in Chapter I. On the whole we may wonder at their absence rather than their presence. It is sometimes possible to distinguish men of different tribes merely by differences in their dress and ornaments. The Binandele commonly wear the bark-cloth perineal band with the end tied in a knot at the belt; the bush people in general have it suspended as an apron. The Aiga are said to be fond of the streamers of thin betel-palm spathe attached to the tags of their hair. The Tain-Daware and other coastal people especially affect

[1] *Annual Report*, 1914-15, p. 161.

I:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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(*a*) Initiates secluded in the *Oro*

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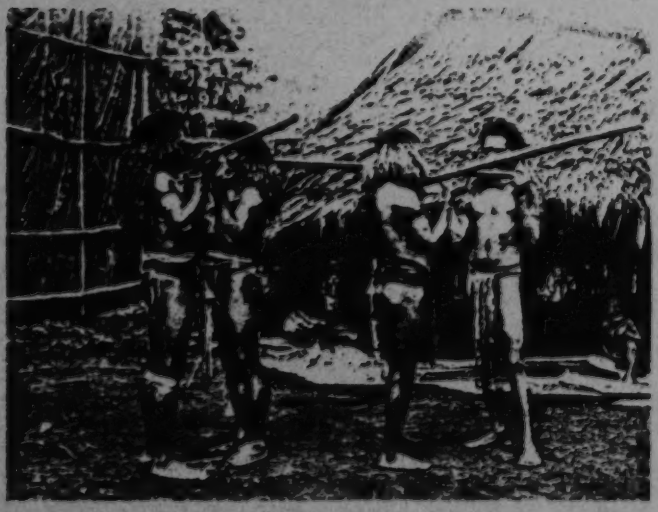

(*b*) Initiates playing the *Sepiri* or Sacred Flute

PLATE XXIV [facing p. 182]

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

an old custom: in after-life a girl would be put to shame if she were reminded that she had made her début without observing that inexplicable but important detail. Some said that the holes in the *bo* were safeguards against the bodily deformities and swellings which the Orokaiva so much dreads; though why they should have this effect remained a problem. It may be that the red smears on the bark-cloth were symbolical of menstrual blood, though no native witness gave that interpretation or any other to them. The sitting first on a log and then on a *tere* mat are both precautions against physical deformity: they exemplify the same ceremonial avoidance of contact with the ground which we have seen with initiates in the *kokumbari* ceremony. Lastly, the fumigation or steaming over the pot of *suna*, and the application of it to parts of the body, are all directed against the same possibility, that of physical deformity.

Among the southern tribes the girl continues to wear an ordinary *bo* (i.e. without perforation) after the ceremony. Among the northern she goes naked until her marriage.

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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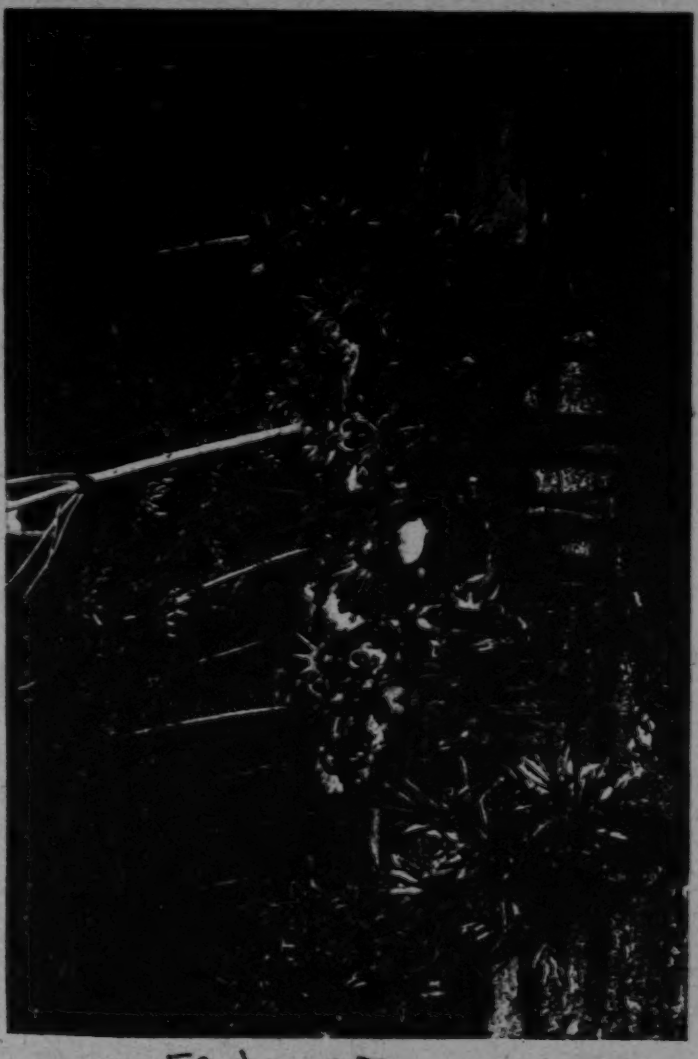

A TARO PARTY EN ROUTE

[facing p.88]